

MUSINGS

Simulacra: smoke and mirrors



Have you seen any faces seared into the surface of any pitas lately? These are often big items on e-Bay. Or you might find word of such phenomena via human interest fillers in the evening television news or in underground newspapers. I am always on the lookout for confirmation of the miraculous. I don't care if it's on a pita or on a tortilla, or on a bank wall. For me, "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth.... The simulacrum is true (Jean Baudrillard)."

I am even satisfied with an ephemeral event. I don't mind if the sign is merely passing through, like dragons flying in the puffiness of cumulous clouds, come and gone like one-night stands, like ocean waves. It can be a fleeting running something, unnamed and unbidden, but insistently proving an existence between the solid here and the undulating there of fantasy. I can be satisfied with the shifting sands of tea leaves left behind from stirring demitasse whirlpools.

Finding a sign is a sigh of relief amidst the mediocrity of the dull, rigid, and confused. I am not alone in this. I know that the humanness of the human

heart is its longing for meaning beyond itself. The best proof that this is true is the fact that there is a name for what I am writing about. How can there be a name for something, agreed upon by folk and even, in this case, scholars, if it is not real? Well, we call it pareidolia. Pareidolia is the giving of meaning to random visual events, like seeing the dragons in clouds, or the pornography in Rorschach cards.

Those with feet firmly planted, not on mystical coffee grounds but on terra firma, may find these are instances of abnormal meaningfulness. Such observers of the external might claim sureness of their consensual and approved reality interpretations. I would like, with pirate glee, to talk to this audience about two interestingly subtle perceptual system malfunctions.

Anton syndrome is the name of the condition of those who are completely blind, but maintain they are not because the cerebral language module that communicates with the outside world is disconnected from the visual cortex. They are blind, and they don't know it. This is a case of not knowing that something is wrong.

Blindsight is the converse. In this syndrome, something is right, and that is not known. The person reports being blind, but can respond to characteristics of visual stimuli without awareness that s/he has seen it.

Depending on the state of our con-

nectors, we can be easily fooled into believing that we see what we can't see, or that we can't see when in fact we can. What you see is not simply what you get.

Being a pirate, I know that the world is really more like a Rorschach blot than an encyclopedia. We are all playing this wonderful game of interpreting the world. We seduce pieces of the puzzle which begin to stand out with the naming. We say, "See that?" And with enough agreement, the idea becomes a marketable reality.

Nietzsche, in his "Twilight of the Idols," claims that as we move from the raw sense data to the constructions of reason and their subsequent naming, we have less, not more.

I hear his desire. I, too, want to be a primitive with brain soaked in neurotransmitters, ablaze, seeing a world every inch alive, dripping and saturated with the materialization of every thought, sans mediation of verbiage.

But, alas and alack, I also want to be a culturally appropriate modern having tea, pinky raised, with the scientific method.



How can I choose all? The I that is post-modern and beyond loves Winnicott's concept of the transitional object. My transitional object would be a teddy bear with an eye patch and a hook for its left hand. In the holding of my teddy bear I realize myself held by a substantial existence, secure. And, at the same time, I am held by the all possibility of a world whirled, a world of ever expanding improbabilities.

I have this pirate dream. ■

— Rx is the FloridaWeekly muse who hopes to inspire profound mutiny in all those who care to read. Our Rx may be wearing a pirate cloak of invisibility, but emanating from within this shadow is hope that readers will feel free to respond. Who knows: You may even inspire the muse. Make contact if you dare.

It's hard to remember what the feeling of joy was like.
 Even the happy times seem more like a dream than a memory.
 Life has been a spiral downward, and you don't even know how it happened.

Though you feel you can't get any lower ...
 you've reached the bottom ...

JUST LOOK UP
 GOD IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK **UP.ORG**

Visit www.justlookup.org
TO RECEIVE YOUR FREE GIFT
 IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TURN, THIS BOOK WILL POINT YOU IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION ON YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY.

This campaign has been underwritten by
CORNERSTONE
 Kitchens
 SINCE 1988